

JAMI + KRISTA CONTRERAS

Thank you for giving us the time to speak on this important issue. My name is Jami Contreras, this is my wife Krista Contreras and our daughter Bay. You might not recognize us, but it's likely you've heard our story. 6 ½ months ago, Krista gave birth to our beautiful daughter Bay. This was the most exciting time of our lives. We had been excitedly preparing for this for 9 long months. We decorated the nursery, picked out the perfect name, and even interviewed several pediatricians to ensure we had the best fit for our family. So when Bay was 6 days old, we loaded her up for our first big trip out of the house. We were so nervous to leave the house with her that I think we drove 25 miles per hour the whole way. Amongst the fear and anxiety we still felt a sense of security knowing that we had hand picked our pediatrician and that she would be in good hands.

When we arrived at the doctor's office, we stuffed our pockets with bottles of hand sanitizer, covered our baby girl with a blanket, and practically ran to the exam room, no germs were getting to our new baby.

We took Bay out of her car seat and were anxiously waiting to see our doctor. But she never showed up. Instead, we were greeted by a different doctor who quickly informed us that she would be Bays doctor and started to move forward with the

check-up. We were so confused and had to stop her to ask why. She informed us that the doctor we met with and chose as our pediatrician had prayed on it and would not be able to care for Bay and again continued on with the appointment. We were shocked, heart broken, and humiliated. To be honest the rest of the appointment was a blur. After putting so much time and careful consideration into we would trust with our child, we now sat there powerless watching a stranger exam our newborn child for the first time. It was a quiet ride home from the doctor's office. All the excitement we had left the house with was now replaced with fear and uncertainty.

Days later after the whole experience had settled in, we still couldn't shake the feelings about what had happened. And after a little research we were again blindsided with another reality, that this was completely legal in the state of Michigan. Our home state. The state we were born, raised, where we pay taxes, and where we had chosen to build our family. To make matters worse we learned of the new legislation on the table, which would still not protect us, and instead further the protection of the doctor's choice to discriminate against families like ours. The RFRA, or religious freedom restoration Act is...in all definition of the words, a license to discriminate. I

think it's fair to say that we are scared of what could lie ahead for our family. This time it was a pediatrician refusing care to a 6-day-old. But what could be next is what really keeps us up at night. This goes beyond the local baker, or photographer and steps into something as sacred as health care. We were lucky that this was Bay's wellness check up and not a true emergency. But what happens if Bay need to see a specialist and the best doctor around refuses to operate on her because she has 2 moms. Or the paramedic who shows up and decides that I'm not worth saving because I happened to fall in love with a woman. Let's also not forget about the parents who live in rural areas. How far will the have to travel to find a doctor that is willing to see them? Where does RFRA end? It could simply be used in any and all situations to defend discrimination.

As we speak the Supreme Court is hearing oral arguments to possibly make marriage equality the law of the land. But instead of being able to focus on the forward progress we are making as a country, we are here, fighting to keep our state from moving backwards. We already have religious protections in our constitution. The group that RFRA is trying to protect is already protected. What we need now more than ever, is protections for the LGBT community. We are not asking

for special treatment. We are simply asking to let our daughter grow up in a state that respects and protects her rights just as much as everyone else's. Our daughter deserves access to the same resources as every other child. This time Bay was 6 days old, I just pray that next time she's not 6 years old and asking why she's being treated differently all because she was born into a family that has two loving parents that happen to be of the same sex.

So today we ask you to please think about ALL Michigan citizens and families when considering this discriminatory bill. Thank you for your time and thank you for having us.